

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5343
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL
COMUSFORAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2552

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, PO
SUBJECT: EANES LAYS IT ON THE LINE

REF: LISBON 2544

SUMMARY: IN AN APRIL 4 CEREMONY INSTALLING THE NEW ARMY CHIEF
OF STAFF, PRESIDENT EANES DELIVERED A STRAIGHT-FROM-THE-
SHOULDER MESSAGE: MILITARY MEN SHOULD STAY OUT OF
POLITICS. EANES PULLED NO PUNCHES IN CRITICIZING CIVILIAN
POLITICAL LEADERS WHO SEEK TO ENLIST THE MILITARY IN THEIR
ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PLANS. IT WAS A SOBERING, NO-NONSENSE MESSAGE
DESIGNED TO PUT ALL CONCERNED ON NOTICE--MILITARY AND CIVILIAN
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ALIKE--THAT EFFORTS TO POLITICIZE THE ARMED FORCES WILL NOT
BE TOLERATED. END SUMMARY.

1. STRAIGHT TALK: IN AN APRIL 4 CEREMONY INSTALLING
GEN PEDRO COARDOSO AS ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, PRESIDENT
EANES DELIVERED ONE OF THIS BLUNTEST SPEECHES TO DATE.
HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

--POLITICAL LEGITIMACY: THERE ARE LEGITIMATE AND ILLEGITIMATE REGIMES. LEGITIMACY IS CONFERRED BY THE BALLOT BOX NOT BULLETS. A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT HAS THE RIGHT TO EXPOBEDIENCE FROM THE ARMED FORCES; AND THE ARMED FORCES HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO OBEY.

--ERRORS OF THE PAST: DURING THE PAST TWO CENTURIES, THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN INCITERS OF DISORDER RATHER THAN GUARANTORS OF ORDER. THIS HAS RESULTED MORE FROM INCAPACITY OF THE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP THAN ANY SPECIAL VOCATION OF MILITARY MEN FOR GOVERNING. TO REPEAT THE ERRORS OF THE PAST WOULD CARRY UNACCEPTABLE RISKS.

--GETTING DOWN TO CASES: THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE WHICH HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A NORMAL CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY - ANOTHER STEP IN THE RETURN TO THE TRADITIONAL MILITARY HIERARCHY - DEMONSTRATES THAT THERE IS STILL A MISQUIDED AND TOO CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND THE MILITARY. IT SHOWS THAT PORTUGAL IS NOT YET FREE OF THE ERRORS OF THE PAST.

--RESPONDING TO SA CARNEIRO: THOSE MOTIVATED BY AN AMBITION TO RULE AND IMPATIENCE WITH DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES, WHO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WITH PROPHECIES OF DOOM AND APPEALS TO NEW MESSIAHS, ARE ON THE WRONG TRACK.

--REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL ROLE: TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS PREVIOUSLY WORKED OUT BETWEEN THE POLITICAL PARTIES ARE JUST THAT. THEIR SINGLE LEGITIMATE OBJECTIVE IS TO
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ESTABLISH THE CONDITIONS FOR THE SUBORDINATION OF THE ARMED FORCES TO DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL POWER.

--A WARNING: THE ARMED FORCES, THEREFORE, SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO PUNISH OR EXPEL FROM ITS RANKS THOSE WHO USE THEIR POSITIONS TO ADVANCE PARTISAN CAUSES.

2. COMMENT: EANES LAID IT SQUARELY ON THE LINE: MILITARY MEN ARE TO STAY OUT OF POLITICS. HE FRANKLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE GRAVITY OF RIGHT AND LEFT-WING MILITARY POLITICKING. AT THE SAME TIME HE CALLED THE MILITARY TO ORDER, EANES PULLED NO PUNCHES IN CRITICIZING CIVILIAN POLITICAL LEADERS WHO SEEK TO ENLIST THE MILITARY IN THEIR ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PLANS. ALTHOUGH NO NAMES WERE MENTIONED, IT WAS CLEAR EANES WAS POINTING THE FINGER MAINLY AT SA CARNEIRO. IT WAS A SOBERING, NO-NONSENSE MESSAGE DESIGNED TO PUT ALL CONCERNED ON NOTICE--MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ALIKE--THAT EFFORTS TO POLITICIZE THE ARMED FORCES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
BLOOMFIELD

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